are pending in this application. Claims 4-5, 7-10, 15, 23-24, 26-29 and 34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-5, 8-24, 27-42 and 45-55 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,192,050 to Stovall in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,021,428 to Miloslavsky. Claims 6-7, 25-26 and 43-44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Stovall in view of Miloslavsky and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,657,282 to Gerber et al. After a careful review of the claims (as amended), it has been concluded that the rejections are in error and the rejections are, therefore, traversed.

2.   Claims 4-5, 7-10, 15, 23-24, 26-29 and 34 have been rejected as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner asserts that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the term "agent group". In response, the antecedent linkage has been corrected.

Claims 8 and 27 have been further limited to the method step of (and means for) detecting entry of information through a previously visited webpage. Support for this limitation may be found in the specification at page 9, lines 21-30.

3.   Claims 1-5, 8-24, 27-42 and 45-55 have been rejected as being obvious over Stovall in view of Miloslavsky. In particular, the Examiner asserts that

> As claims 1-3, 5, 8-13, 15-22, 24, 27-32, 34-39, 42 and 45-55, Stoval discloses (Fig 1-3 and col. 1, lines 59 to col. 8, lines 15) a method for establishing an audio call path between an Internet

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user accessing a web site and an agent of the web site comprises the steps of providing the web site with a plurality of audio access icons and a plurality of agents; each audio icon disposes on a respective web page (Fig 2-3 discloses a web server which includes plurality of web pages having a plurality o call buttons, each button is disposed with a respective web page; wherein the customer click on the button to establish an internet telephone between the customer and agent at the call center); an ACD which places the IP address of user in a call queue of the associated agent until a next available agent becomes available (Col. 3, lines 64 to col 4, lines 15); the IP address is forwarded to the agent, wherein the web site decodes the requested message for obtaining IP address wherein the IP address is entered in an entry window and the agent uses the IP addresses for establishing a voice path between the agent and customer by exchanging the IP addresses (Col. 4, lines 51-65 and col. 5, lines 53-57). In the same field of endeavor, Miloslavsky discloses (Fig 1-23 and col. 1, lines 24 to col. 39, lines 58) the steps of detecting an activation of an audio access icon of plurality of icons; determining an overall type of question associated with each audio icon from information content of the web page of activated icon; selecting an agent with a best relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skill list for the agents; call center has a plurality of agent groups wherein each of agent group is associated with an audio icon (col. 1, lines 42-48, col 12, lines 5-39 and col. 15, lines 1-28); a customer information which is stored in the database, is retrieved to transmit to the workstation of the selected agent of the agent group (col 23, lines 61-67); transfer a collected information and identifier agent to a database of the web site and the group of agents and retrieve the user record from database and display this record at the terminal of agent. (See col. 1, lines 32-52, col. 10, lines 45 to col. 15, lines 67; col. 20, lines 37-53; col. 25, lines 5-37; the customer clicks on the icon to speak to an agent, the IP address of the customer and information reviewed web pages will be send to call center for determining to select a quality agent from an agent group which is associated with this product and the information agent and customer which are stored in the database, retrieved to forward to

the work station of agent, database, 4110 for storing the information above customer and agent.

Since Miloslavsky suggests that the telephone number can be replaced with the Internet address of the customer when the customer submits the information to the call center for establishing a voice call between the customer and agent. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to apply teaching of Miloslavsky such as determining a history requested of customer to select a skill agent into Stovall's communication system. The motivation would have been to avoid a long distance charge when the customer requests some information about the product.

It is noted first that the claims (as amended) are now limited to the method steps of (and apparatus for) "determining an overall type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website" and "selecting an agent of the plurality of agents with a best relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents". The specification provides numerous examples (specification, page 9, lines 9-30) of where the overall type of question is determined from the information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from the context of prior interactions between the user and the website. Further, a file is opened (specification, page 8, lines 20-22) and updated accordingly (specification, page 9, lines 8-9) to collect information regarding prior interactions between the user and the website. Based upon the content of the file, the "ACD application then begins taking steps to determined the identity of the appropriate agent or agent group to connect to the user" (specification, page 9, lines 19-21).

In contrast, Stovall explicitly states that "the customer clicks on the graphical hot button or link (step 306) and optionally is prompted to enter his name, phone number a description of the subject in question, if this information is not already available" (Stovall, col. 4, lines 56-60). An "Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) 212 unit operates by transferring . . . subject of the further information requested into a queue for service by the next available operator stationed at one of the multimedia

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operator consoles 202, 204, 206" (Stovall, col. 3, line 64 to col. 4, line 2).

Since Stovall operates by prompting the customer to enter the subject on the webpage of the hot button, if it is not already present on the webpage, Stovall fails to incorporate the "context of prior interactions between the user and the website" into agent selection. Further, since Stovall assigns calls to the "next available operator", there is no teaching or suggestion of agent selection based upon the determination of the type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon.

Miloslavsky also fails to teach or suggest the above-mentioned two claim limitations. For example, Miloslavsky "selects an available service agent in accordance with predetermined criteria" (Miloslavsky, col. 12, lines 32-33). Specific examples of the predetermined criteria are limited to "availability of agents" or "previous interaction between a certain agent and customer site" (Miloslavsky, col. 12, lines 34-35). Further, "As a result, the service agent who will interact with the user in customer site 1104 is able to see the same web page the user is seeing" (Miloslavsky, col. 12, lines 40-42).

Since the Miloslavsky agent only sees the same web page that the user is seeing, Miloslavsky fails to "determining an overall type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website". Since Miloslavsky fails to determine an "overall type of question", Miloslavsky would also inherently fail to teach or suggest the step of (and apparatus for) "selecting an agent of the plurality of agents with a best

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relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents".

Further, the Miloslavsky process of searching e-mails for key words and assigning agents to respond to the e-mails based upon skill does not meet the explicit limitations of the claimed invention. For example, Newton's Telecom Dictionary (18th Ed.) defines e-mail as "Electronic Text Mail, as opposed to Electronic Voice Mail or Electronic Image Mail". In contrast, Newton's defines a web page as "an HTML document on the Web". Further, as would be well understood to those of skill in the art, e-mail is used for entirely different purposes than web pages. While e-mail may be used in conjunction with a web page, the two concepts would be understood by those of skill in the art as non-overlapping in content and use.

Since the combination of Stovall and Miloslavsky fail to teach or suggest the method steps of (or apparatus for) "determining an overall type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website" or "selecting an agent of the plurality of agents with a best relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents", the combination fails to teach each and every claim limitation. Since the combination fails to teach each and every claim limitation, the rejection is believed to be improper and should be withdrawn.

4. Claims 6-7, 25-26 and 43-44 have been rejected as being obvious over Stovall in view of Miloslavsky and further in view of Gerber et al. However, a review of

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Gerber et al. reveals that Gerber et al. also fails to provide any teaching or suggestion of "determining an overall type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website" or "selecting an agent of the plurality of agents with a best relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents". As such, the combination of Stovall, Miloslavsky and Gerber et al. fails to teach each and every claim limitation. Since the combination fails to teach each and every claim limitation, the rejection is believed to be improper and should be withdrawn.

5. In addition, claims 8 and 27 are now limited to the method step of (and apparatus for) determining a type of question from information entered through a previously visited webpage. Nowhere within the combination of Stovall and Miloslavsky or Stovall, Miloslavsky and Gerber et al. is there any teaching or suggestion of this aspect of the invention. Since there is no teaching or suggestion of these claim elements, claim 8 and 27 should be allowable.

6. Allowance of claims 1-55, as now presented, is believed to be in order and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to telephone applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked Up Version of the Claims

1.   A method of establishing an audio call path between an Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of a plurality of agents associated with the web site, such method comprising the steps of:

providing the web site with a plurality of audio access icons each disposed on a respective web page of the web site;

detecting activation of an audio access icon of the plurality of icons by the Internet user;

determining an overall type of question associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon <u>and from a context of prior interactions between the Internet user and the website</u>;

selecting an agent of the plurality of agents with a best relative ability to answer the determined type of question based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents; and

establishing a voice path using IP telephony between Internet voice plug-ins of the user and the selected agent.

4.   The method as in claim 1 wherein the step of [associating an agent group with each icon] <u>selecting an agent</u> further comprises correlating a training level of [the] <u>each</u> agent [group] of the plurality of agent<u>s</u> [groups] with the subject matter of each audio-access icon.

5.   The method as in claim 1 wherein the step of establishing a call path between the user and [an] <u>the selected</u> agent [of the associated agent group based upon activation of an audio-access icon] further comprises placing an Internet address of the user in a call queue of the [associated group] <u>the selected agent</u> until the <u>selected</u> agent becomes available.

7.   The method as in claim 6 further comprising comparing the measured time with a threshold value and overflowing the user to a queue of another agent [group] of the plurality of agents [groups] when the measured time exceeds the threshold.

8.   The method as in claim 1 <u>wherein the determination of the type of question</u> further comprise<u>s</u>[ing selecting the agent of the established voice path from the associated agent group] <u>detecting entry of information through a previously visited webpage</u>.

9.   The method as in claim [8] <u>1</u> wherein the step of establishing a call path between the user and the agent of the [associated] <u>plurality of</u> agent<u>s</u> [group] based upon activation of the audio-access icon further comprises transferring an Internet address of the selected agent to the user.

10.   The method as in claim [8] <u>1</u> wherein the step of establishing a call path between the user and the agent of the [associated] <u>plurality of</u> agent<u>s</u> [group] based upon activation of the audio-access icon further comprises transferring an Internet address of the user to the selected agent [of the associated agent group].

15.   The method as in claim 11 further comprising transferring the collected information from the user and an identifier of the <u>selected</u> agent of the [associated] <u>plurality of</u> agents [group] to a database of the web site.

18. A method of servicing an inquiry from a user through the Internet, such method comprising the steps of:

providing a web site with a plurality of audio access icons and at least some web pages with an audio access icon of the plurality of audio access icons associated with each web page of the at least some web pages;

associating an agent group with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of each of the at least some web pages;

detecting an activation of an audio-access icon of the plurality of icons by the user;

determining a type of problem associated with the activated audio-access icon from [an] the subject matter of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website;

selecting an agent with a best relative ability to address the problem based upon the determined type of problem and a skills list for the agent group; and

providing an call path using IP telephony between Internet voice plug-ins of the user and the selected agent of the associated agent group.

19. A method of servicing an inquiry from a user through the Internet, such method comprising the steps of:

providing a web site with a plurality of web pages for access by the user;

providing an audio-access icon on at least some web pages of the web site;

associating an agent group with the at least some web pages;

detecting activation by the user of an audio access icon provided on the at least some web pages;

determining a type of problem associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website;

selecting an agent with a best relative ability to address the determined type of problem based upon a skills list for the agent group; and

providing an call path using IP telephony between Internet voice plug-ins of the user and the selected agent of the associated agent group.

20. Apparatus for establishing an audio call path between an Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of a plurality of agents associated with the web site, such apparatus comprising:

means for providing a web site with a plurality of audio access icons each disposed on a respective web page of the web site;

[means for associating an agent group of the plurality of agent groups with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of the web site];

means for detecting activation of an audio access icon of the plurality of icons by the Internet user;

means for determining a type of problem associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the

web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the user and the website;

means for selecting an agent with a best relative ability to address the determined type of problem based upon a skills list for the plurality of agents [group]; and

means for establishing a call path using IP telephony between Internet voice plug-ins of the user and the selected agent of the [associated] plurality of agents [group].

23. The [method] apparatus as in claim 22 wherein the means for [associating an agent group with each icon] selecting an agent further comprises means for correlating a training level of [the] each agent [group] of the plurality of agents [groups] with the subject matter of each audio-access icon.

24. The apparatus as in claim 1 wherein the means for establishing a call path between the user and [an] the selected agent [of the associated agent group based upon activation of an audio-access icon] further comprises means for placing an Internet address of the user in a call queue of the [associated group] the selected agent until the selected agent becomes available.

26. The apparatus as in claim 25 further comprising means for comparing the measured time with a threshold value and overflowing the user to a queue of another agent [group] of the plurality of agents [groups] when the measured time exceeds the threshold.

27. The apparatus as in claim 19 <u>wherein the means for determining a type of question</u> further compris<u>es</u>[ing] means for [selecting the agent from the associated agent group] <u>detecting entry of information through a previously visited webpage</u>.

28. The apparatus as in claim [27] <u>19</u> wherein the means for establishing a call path between the user and the agent of the [associated] <u>plurality of</u> agent<u>s</u> [group] based upon activation of the audio-access icon further comprises means for transferring an Internet address of the selected agent to the user.

29. The apparatus as in claim [27] <u>19</u> wherein the means for establishing an call path between the user and an agent of the [associated] <u>plurality of</u> agents [group] based upon activation of a audio-access icon further comprises means for transferring an Internet address of the user to the selected agent.

34. The apparatus as in claim 30 further comprising means for transferring the collected information and an identifier of the selected agent to a database of the web site [and plurality of agent groups].

37. Apparatus for establishing an audio call path between an Internet user accessing a web site and an agent of a plurality of agents associated with the web site, such apparatus comprising:

        a web site with a plurality of audio access icons and a plurality of agent groups;

a call distribution controller operably coupled to the web site which associates an agent group of the plurality of agent groups with a subject matter of each audio-access icon of the web site;

detecting activation of an audio access icon of the plurality of icons by the Internet user;

determining a type of problem associated with the activated audio-access icon from an information content of the respective web page of the activated audio access icon and from a context of prior interactions between the Internet user and the website;

selecting an agent of the agent group associated with the activated icon with a best relative ability to address the problem based upon the determined type of problem and a skills list for the agent group; and

a local area network which establishes a call path using IP telephony between Internet voice plug-ins of the user and the selected agent of the associated agent group.